Cuba Seeks Prisoner Exchange

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HAVANA, Nov. 7 (UPI) The Cuban government today formally proposed broadening its refugee agreement with the United States to include political prisoners.

In a note sent to U.S. officials and printed in newspapers here, the government said it would consider freeing political prisoners if the United States could obtain the release of revolutionaries in other Latin American jails.

Mention of such a plan was made earlier, but this apparently is the first time the idea has been advanced as a solid proposal. U.S. officials earlier regarded the idea as a propaganda move, saying the United States has no control over prisoners in other countries.

[In Washington, U.S. officials indicated that their attitude toward the proposal has not changed: that the idea of prisoner exchanges involving third-party countries has nothing to do with the original Cuban proposal to allow the exit of Cubans wishing to leave their country.]

The Cuban note said:

"Knowing the close and friendly relations of the United States government with several Latin American countries where there are many cases of citizens sentenced for revolutionary deeds, the Cuban government is willing to consider the possibility of releasing a number of sanctioned (jailed) for counter-revolutionary activities for the same number sanctioned for revolutionary conduct whose liberty the United States government manages to obtain in countries like Venezuela, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, Paraguay and Argentina."